

Final Cut Express Documentation

Final Cut Express is the cut down version of Final Cut Pro which is fast becoming the TV & Film industry's standard video editing software. Throughout this documentation, Final Cut Express will be referred to as Final Cut as most operations relate to all versions.

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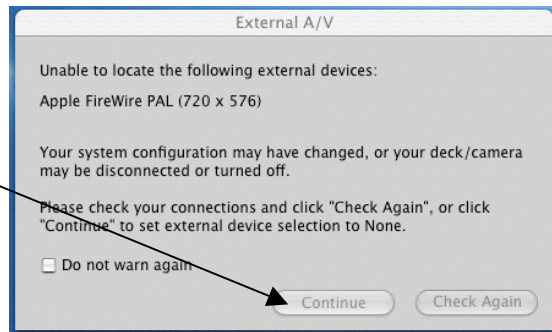
Opening Final Cut

There are two ways of opening up Final Cut, with camera or without camera.

If your editing session involves downloading footage from a camera source then it is important that you connect your camera with a Fire Wire cable **before** opening the program.

If you have already downloaded all your footage and are just intending to edit, there is no need to connect your camera. When you open Final Cut without camera, the following window will appear:

To open Final Cut without a camera connection Click Continue.



If you are using a full editing set up that features a separate TV monitor and sound system you will need to connect these peripherals via the camera before opening Final Cut.

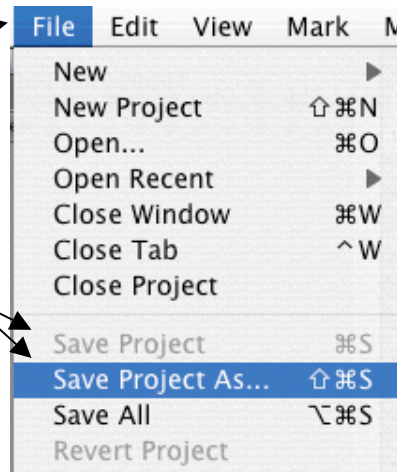
Saving your project

Before starting a project you should save it.

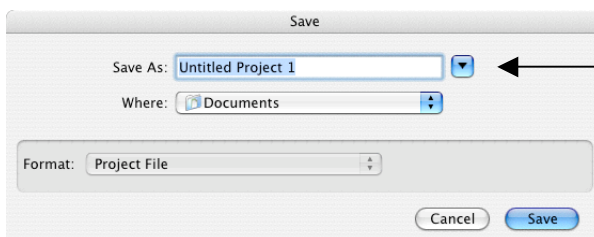
Click the File drop down menu then click Save Project As.

Note that the Save Project option is not available until the project has been saved via Save Project As.

Once initially saved, use the Save Project function for your regular saving.

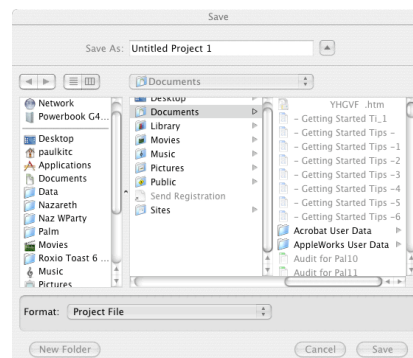


Open the save window so it reveals all options.



Click the single down pointing arrow

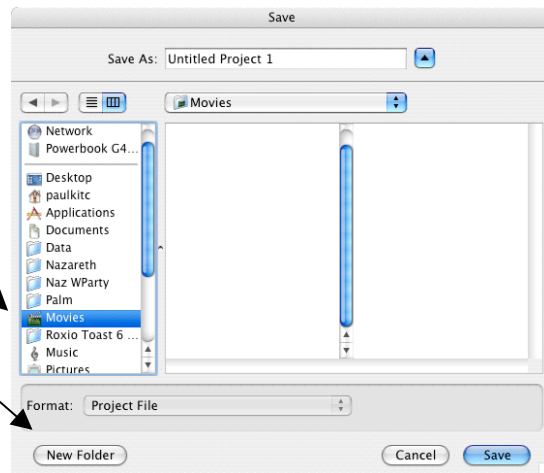
It should now look something like this:



At this stage it is a good idea to establish which directory you want to save your project (recommended in the Movies folder). In this directory you should create a new folder and name it the title or theme of your project.

Select the Movie folder

then click the New Folder button



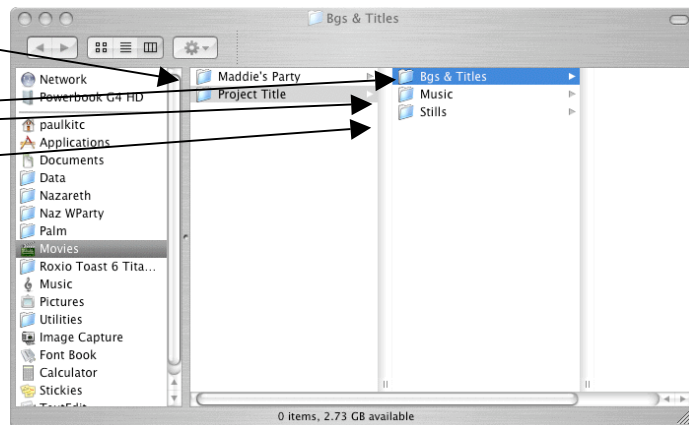
Off-line Files

It is advisable that all the off line files (eg still images & sound files) you require for your project are saved in the one folder. A Final Cut project is similar to a web page in that there are many files that are linked to the main project rather than imbedded within the project. If all the files are centrally stored in a similar location it makes the managing of the project much easier.

Your project folder should include other folders such as a Backgrounds & Titles folder, a Music Folder and a Stills folder.

The **Bgs & Titles** folder will be where you store any titles or backgrounds that you create with specialised titling programs like LiveType (comes free with Final Cut Pro HD). This is not essential as a wide range of titling can be created using Final Cut.

The **Music** folder is where all music files for your project should be used. Note that you should not use Mp3 files, they produce poor quality results.



The **Stills** folder is where you store any still images that you want to use. Final Cut works well with most images types. Final cut works especially well .psd files (Adobe PhotoShop files).

On-line Files

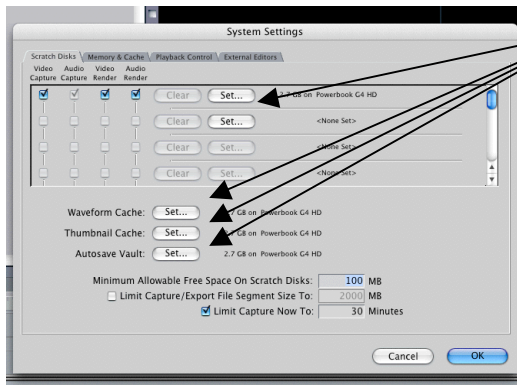
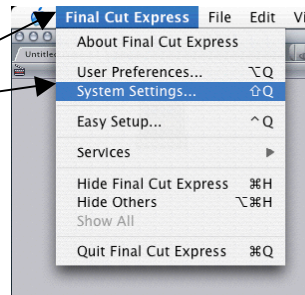
Probably the most important files you will use in your project are the on-line files (the moving footage downloaded from a camera). These files are the ones that take up the most memory and therefore need to be removed when the project is complete to free up

disk space. You can set the project to save all the on-line data to your project folder (see below). If you don't do this, all on-line data will default to the following directory:

Your HD: Users: Your Account: Documents: Final Cut Express Documents: Capture Scratch: Your Project Title

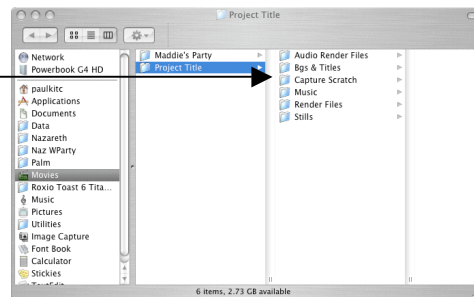
The important thing is to know where your online files are stored so you can remove them or reconnect to them if necessary, as the case may be.

To set your project to save all online files to your designated project folder click the Final Cut Express drop down menu then select System Settings.



Click the following Set buttons and point them towards your designated project folder.

Your project folder should now feature an Audio Render Files folder, a Capture Scratch folder and a Render files folder as well as the other folders that you manually created.



The raw footage is stored in the Capture Scratch folder

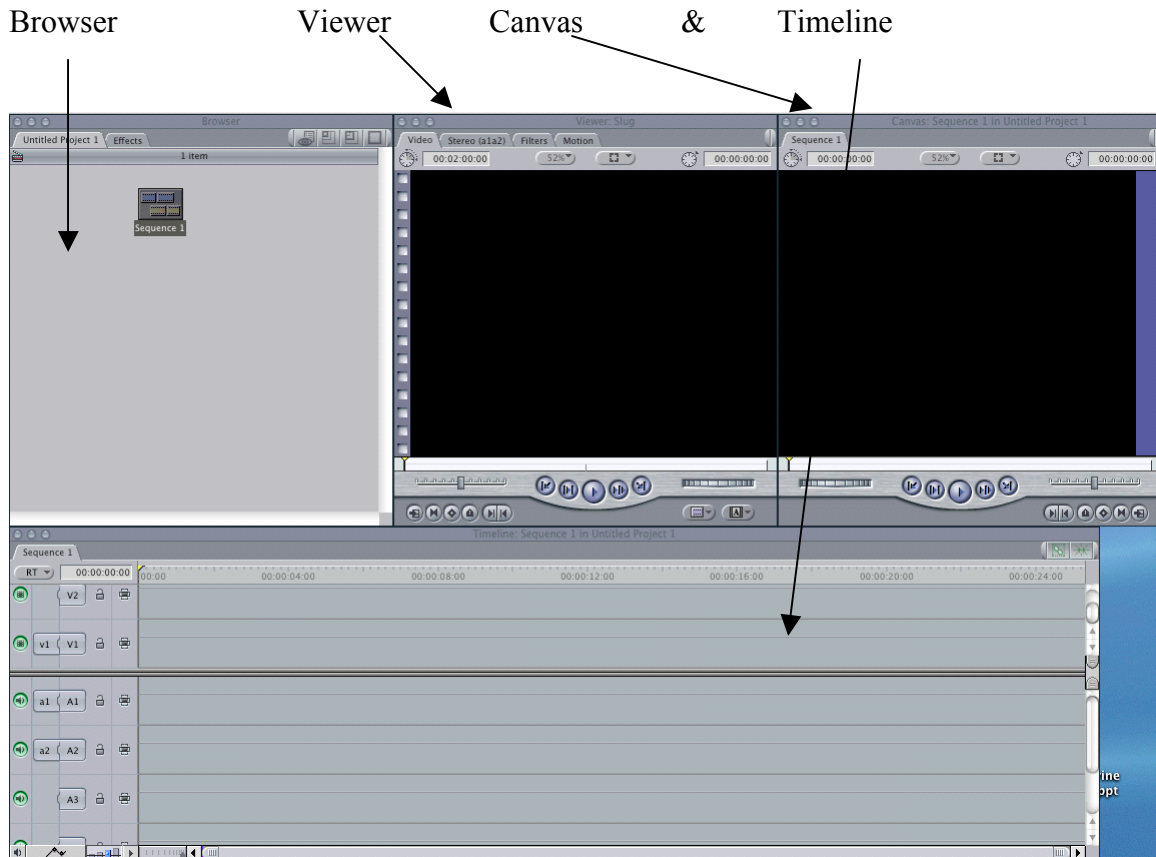
It is a wise idea to check your system settings at the start of each editing session to make sure all the Set buttons are pointing in the right direction, especially if you are about to capture footage. If you are in the habit of trashing your preferences (see page __) as a method of trouble shooting note that you will need to re-set your system settings as well as make sure Final Cut is set to DV Pal and not NTSC.

If the above system settings instructions appear too complicated don't worry about it. Just find your online files within the default directory.

Your HD: Users: Your Account: Documents: Final Cut Express Documents: Capture Scratch: Your Project Title

The Final Cut Environment

The following image depicts the basic Final Cut environment. This includes 4 main windows.



The **Browser** features links to your online and off line files eg Moving Footage, Still images, music files etc. It works like the Mac Finder file directory or Windows Explorer on a PC, you can view the files as a list (recommended), small icons, medium icons or large icons. Note that all online files should automatically link to the Browser, otherwise they need to be imported (see page ____).

The **Viewer** displays the content of files that you are editing, allowing the placement of an in and out point.

The **Canvas** displays what is being edited. It also features simple insert shortcuts upon which data from the viewer can be dragged.

The **Timeline** displays the whole project in order from beginning to end. It features multiple video and audio tracks.

Capturing footage

To download footage from a DV Camera to Final Cut you need to connect the two devices via a Fire Wire cable before opening the program. Once connected and open, save the project and adjust the systems settings as described above.

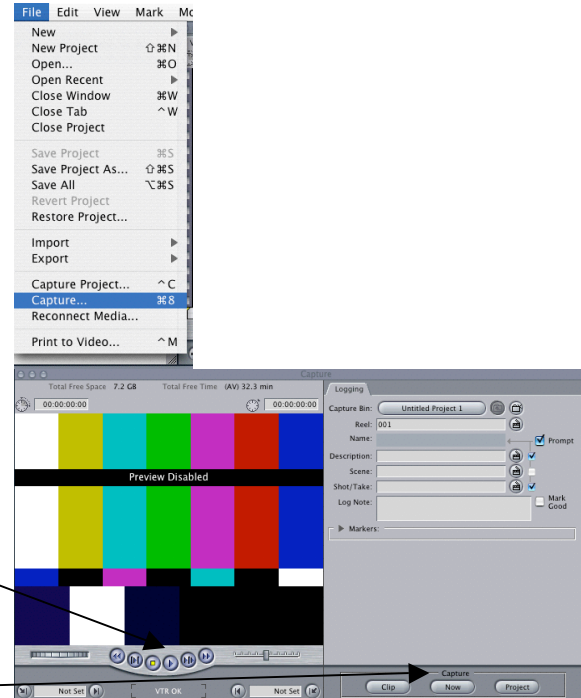
It is recommended that you don't have any other programs running while capturing, especially if you have less than 1GB of RAM.

Click the File drop down window then select the Capture button.

This will open the Capture Window.

The Capture window controls the camera and the capturing process.

For a simple capture, click the play button then just before you come to some footage that you want to edit you click the Capture Now button.



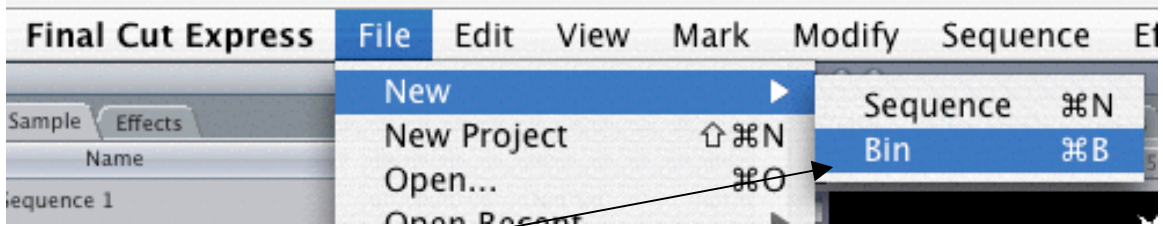
You should see a display of what you are capturing. To stop the capture process click the Escape button on your keyboard.

It's highly recommended that you only capture what you require to save disk space. Approximately 5 minutes of full quality captured footage (QuickTime Movie) = Approximately 1GB.

Organising your Browser

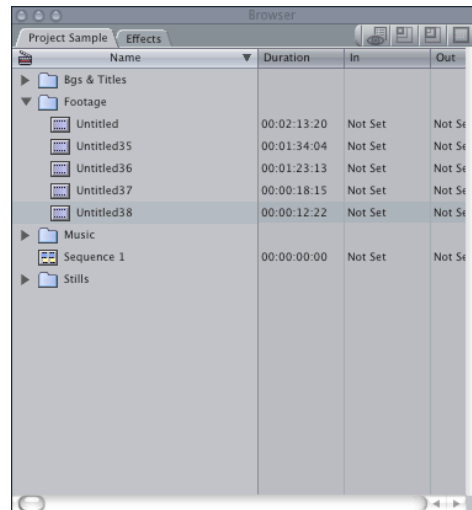
As you capture footage a link to the file should appear in your Browser named Untitled 1 or Untitled 2 etc. It is recommended that you set up folders or Bins as they are sometimes referred to in Final Cut. Your Bins should reflect the folders in your project folder on your hard drive, for example a bin footage, still images, backgrounds and titles & music.

To create a bin click into the Browser window, go to File then New then Bin



Note the short cut – command B

Your Browser should look something like this



Making a simple edit

The following keys on your keyboard are your main editing tools:

I = input (press this key at the start of your edit)

O = output (press this key at the end of your edit)

J = reverse (the more you click the faster the footage goes backwards)

L = forward (the more you click the faster the footage goes forwards)

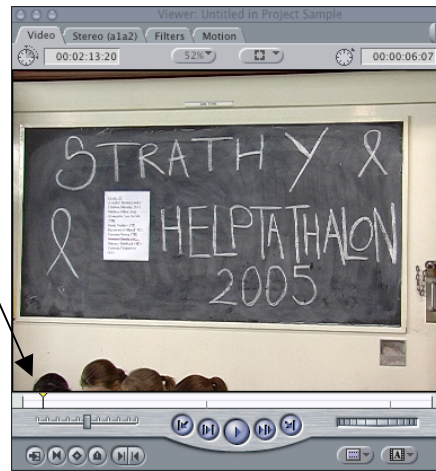
M = marker (used to mark a point in the film that you want to remember or make notes about. To make a note you click the M key twice).

Setting In & Out points

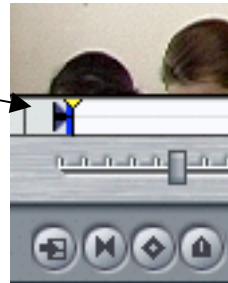
When you double click one of the footage links in the Browser it should appear in the Viewer. A small yellow upside down triangle (the marker) on a sliding bar below the footage can be selected to control the placement of an In or an Out Point.

The In point indicates the start of your edit, the Out point indicates the end of the edit.

When the marker is at the point you want the edit to start click the I key and an In point indicator will appear with the marker.



In point indicator



To set an out point, drag the marker to the point that you want your edit to end then press the O key. An out point indicator should appear with the marker.

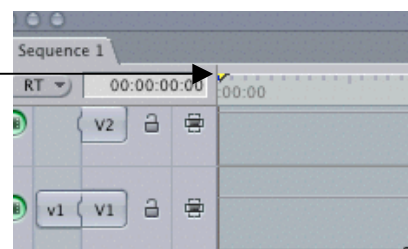
Out point indicator



Inserting the edit onto the time line

The simplest way to insert an edit onto the Timeline is to make sure the Timeline marker is positioned at the point you want the edit to appear then drag from the centre of the Viewer window to the Canvas Window.

Timeline marker



When you drag from the Viewer to the Canvas a small image of the footage is dragged into a new window that appears in the Canvas.

You can chose to Insert the footage

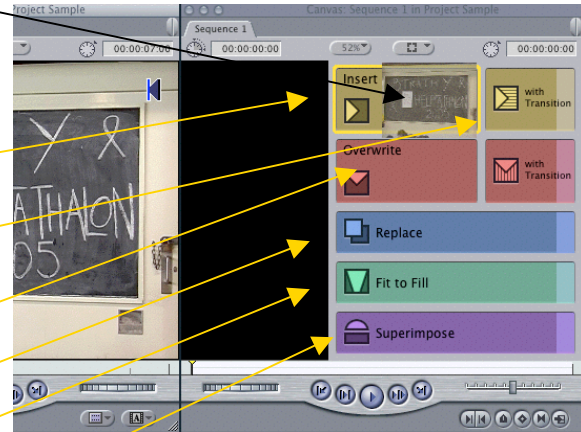
Insert with a cross dissolve transition

Overwrite the edit over footage that already exist on the Timeline

Replace footage on the Timeline

Fit to fill between edits

Superimpose video on top of video that already exists on the timeline



The alternative way to insert edits onto the Timeline is to drag from the Viewer directly to the Timeline. As you drag to the Timeline a small black arrow will appear, to insert the arrow needs to face left, to overwrite it should face downwards.

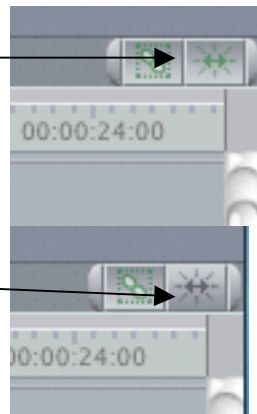
When a collection of edits are inserted onto a timeline it makes the basis of the video clip. As a general rule of thumb, no edit should last more that about 7 seconds before cutting to a different angle or shot.

The snapping function

When manipulating the edits on your Timeline you can choose to have snapping on or off. The snapping button is found at the top right hand corner of the Timeline window. When snapping is on, the edits can snap into position next to each other. This can be helpful when you want to ensure there are no gaps between the edits, however snapping can be frustrating when you want to make fine adjustments to the positioning on an edit.

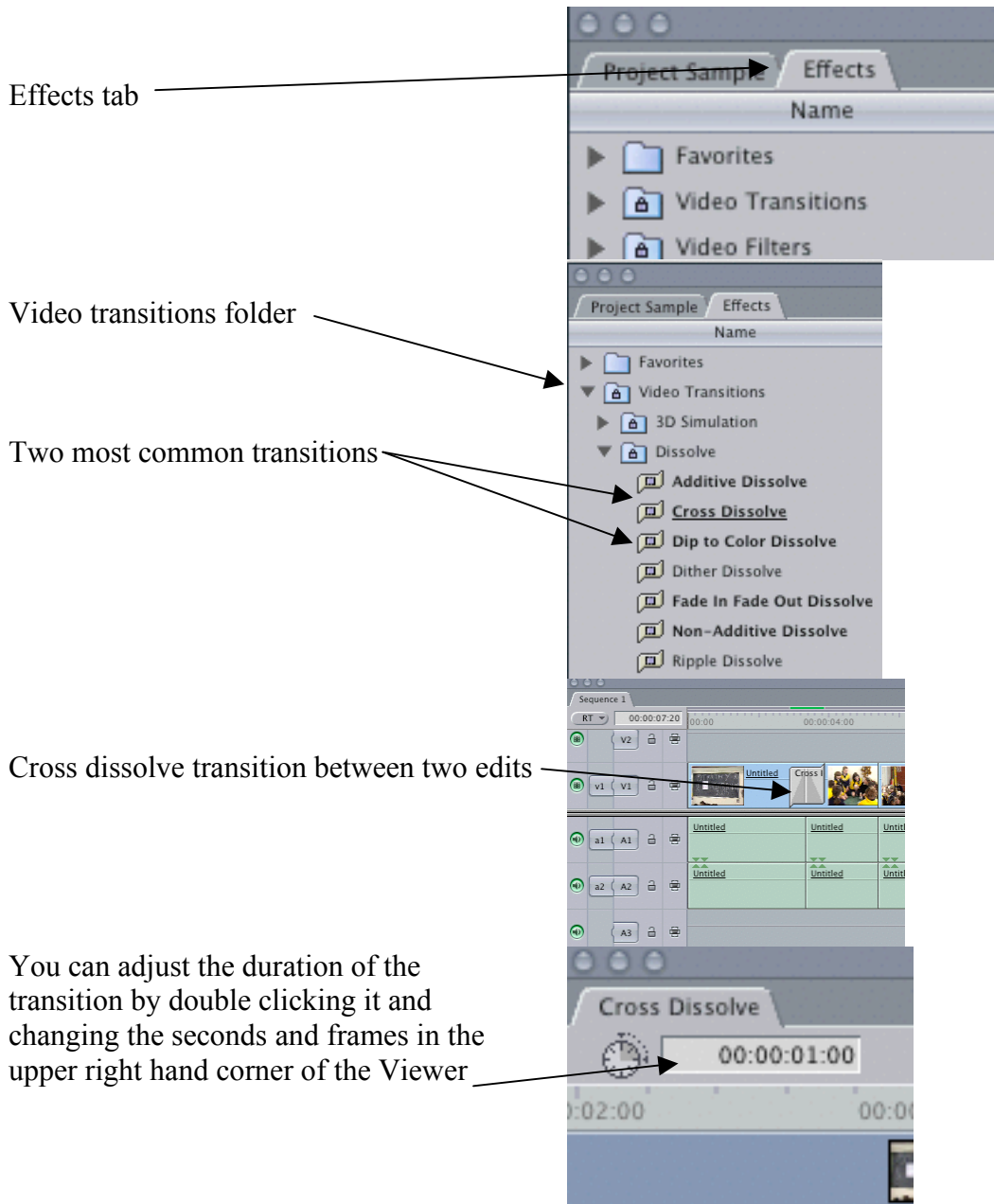
Snapping on

Snapping off



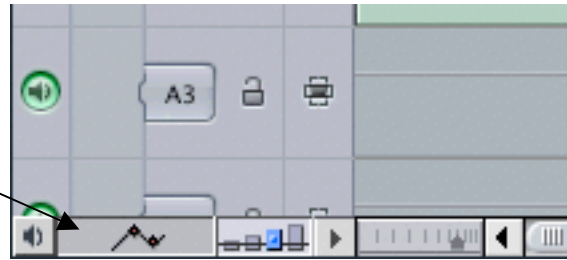
Adding a transition

There are a wide range of effects that can be used to transition between edits. The two most common transitions are cross dissolve and dip to colour dissolve. The transitions are located in the Effects tab within the Browser. You can look through the folders of effects and drag the ones you are likely to use most into the favourites folder for easy access later on. The process of adding a transition involves selecting the effect you want and dragging it in-between the edits.

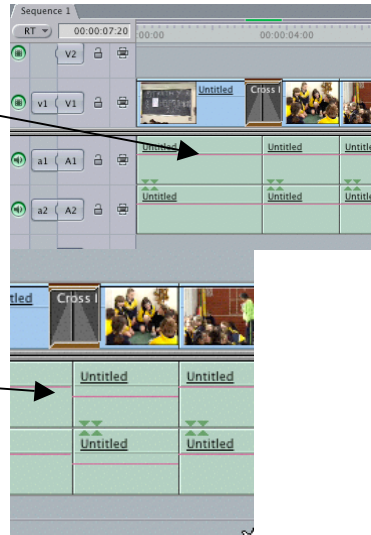


Adjusting volume

To adjust volume first you need to click the Toggle Clip Overlays button on the bottom left hand corner of the Timeline.



This will reveal a thin line along the centre of each audio track.



If you click on the line and drag up you will be increasing the volume of the whole edit. If you drag it down, you will be decreasing the volume,

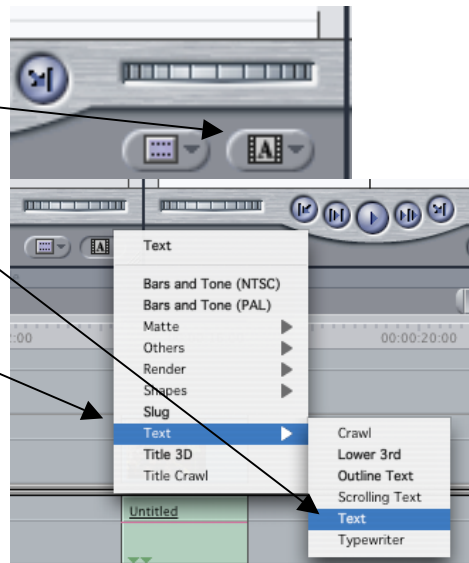
All digital audio should hover between -12 and -6 decibels.

Use the audiometer as a guide and adjust accordingly.

Adding titles

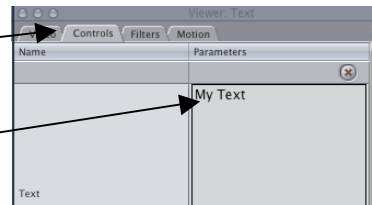
There are a range of title styles featured in Final Cut. The simplest involves ...

Click this button to reveal your titling options



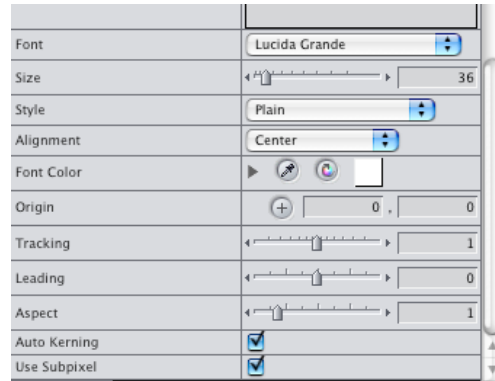
Select the Text function then choose Text again

Click the Controls tab at the top of the Viewer then type the text you want here.

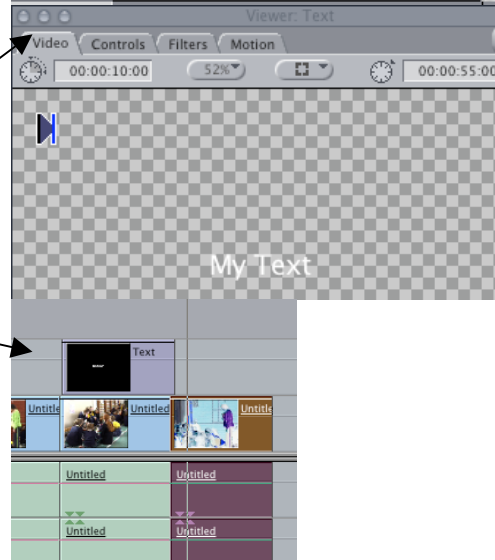


It best to hit the return key after about 4 words depending on the size of your text.

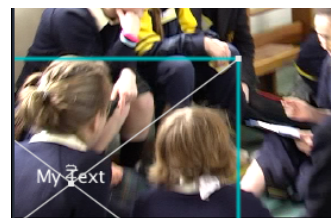
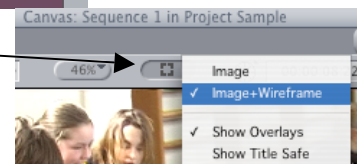
You cab control the type of font, size, style, alignment, colour etc by scrolling down the Controls window.



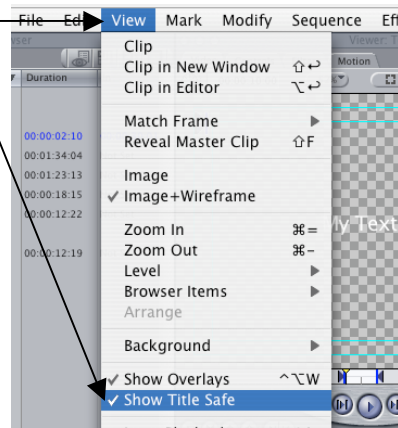
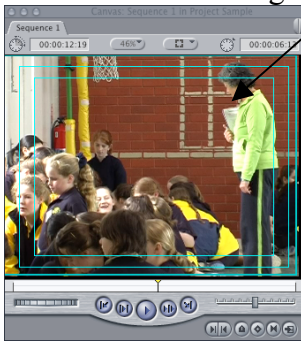
When you have finished manipulating your text click the Video tab to view it and if you are happy, either drag it (from the centre of the Viewer) to the Superimpose function on the Canvas or directly onto the timeline.



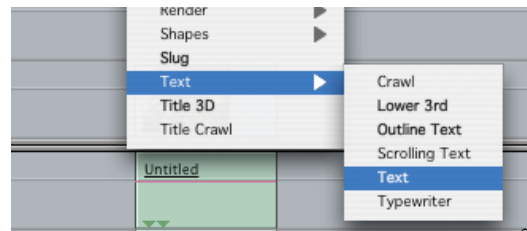
If you activate the Image + Wireframe function on the Canvas you can move the text (and any other data) and resize to your hearts content by clicking the image on the Canvas and moving and or resizing it.



Activate the Title Safe function so that your title appear within the inner rectangle. Most TV monitors will only show what is inside the title safe regions.



Other title options include scrolling text, crawling text and lower third which is good for labeling names at the bottom of the screen



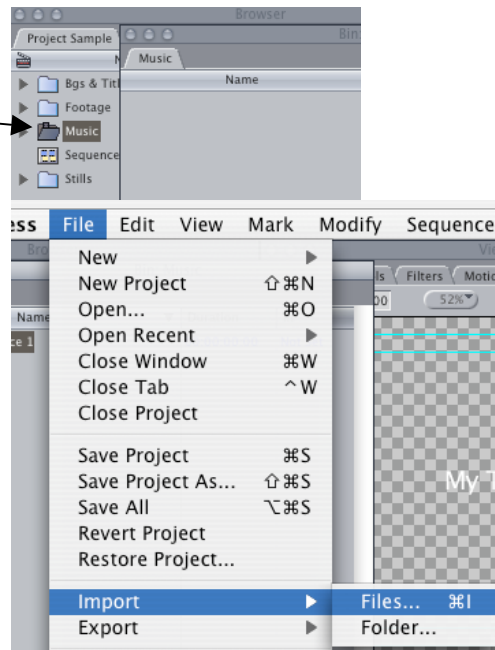
Adding offline files (still images & music files)

Good video clips have more than just moving images, they feature still images and music. The first step in adding any offline file is to save that file onto the hard drive and preferably into the folder that you dedicated to the project. For music files from a CD this is as simple as inserting the CD (ignoring iTunes), copying the track you want and pasting it into the project folder.

Once the file is located in your hard drive you can import it into your project.

Double click the bin/folder that you want your file to be linked to.

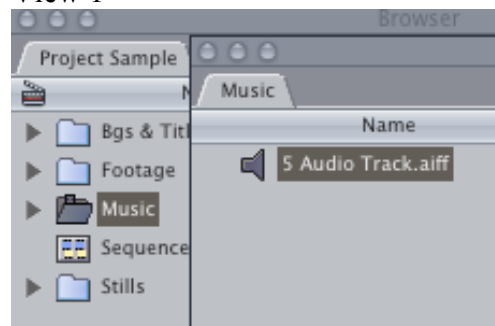
Click File:Import:Files and choose the file you want imported.



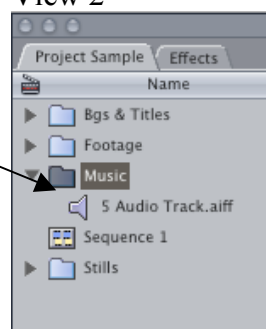
View 1

Once chosen it should appear in the bin. If you double click the file it will appear in the viewer ready to be manipulated if necessary and dragged to the timeline.

Note that audio files need to be dragged from the link in the Browser, not from the Viewer.



View 2



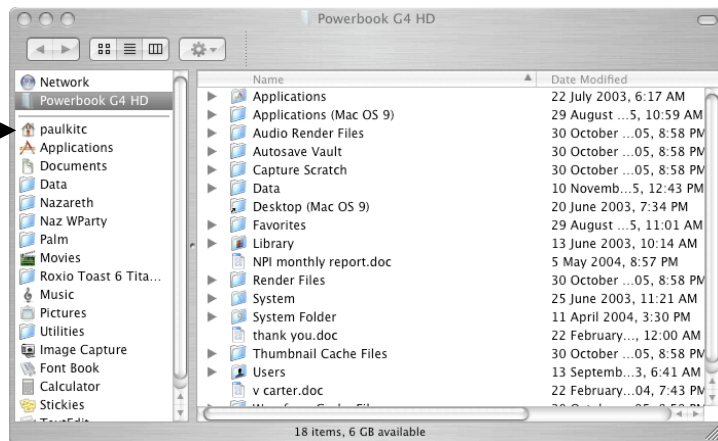
The audio files should be added onto new audio tracks and volume adjusted as instructed above.

Trashing Final Cut Preferences

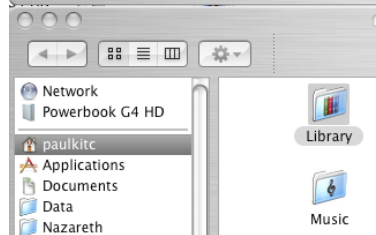
When things go wrong and you are having trouble capturing or doing basic functions one solution is to trash the Final Cut Preferences.

Close the program then go to your main HD window.

Click into your home account

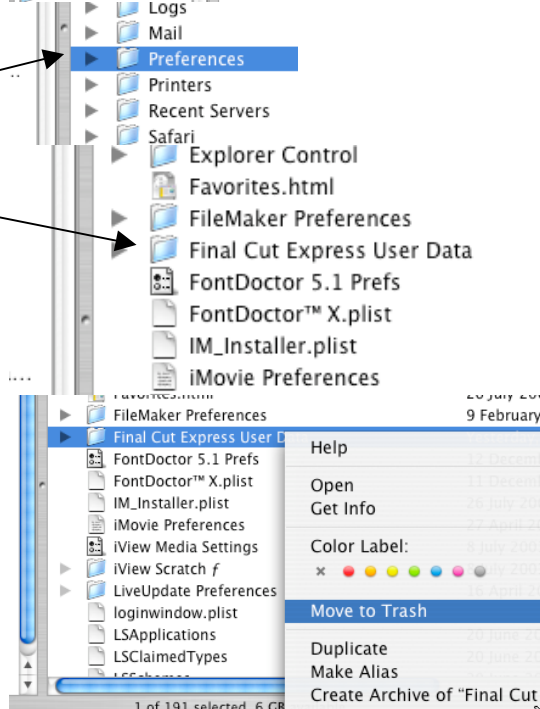


Then select the Library icon.



Once inside the Library folder open up the Preferences folder.

Find the Final Cut User Data folder and highlight it.



Hold the control key, click the mouse and select Move to Trash.

Go to the Finder dropdown window and select Empty Trash.

When you open of Final Cut again it will you want it set up – make sure you choose the DV Pal option, not NTSC.